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LESSER STARS





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LESSER STARS

By

FANNY DE GROOT HASTINGS

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FANNY DE GROOT HASTINGS



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Foreword

A tiny star took its unnoticed flight
From Heaven to-night.

Within the home of Jupiter and Mars
Small heed is paid to any lesser stars.

It fled to earth to hide its humble head,
But earth, receiving it, was comforted.

My verse may covet Heaven above;
Grant, only, that it bring earth love.

CONTENTS

Foreword	5
Contents	7
The Morning Star	9
The Gift	10
To a Firefly	11
Substance	12
Rainbows	13
Reality	14
Common Things	15
To a Paper Cutter	16
Blue	17
Activity	18
Essence	19
Some Winter Lavender	20
Forever	21
Inspiration	22
The Outriders of Spring	23
To the Giver of All Good Gifts	24
As Prodigals My Thoughts Go Home	25
Light of the World	26
The Pure in Heart	27
Highlights	28
Lighter of Lamps	29
King of Kings	30
When These Come Back	31

CONTENTS—*Continued*

Our Trust	32
Swords	33
Wings	35
Wings of the Morning	36
To the Foreign Legion	37
Listen!	38
To the Army of Occupation in Germany	39
The Spirit of God	40
1492—1919	42
Hands	43
The New World	44

THE MORNING STAR.
Christmas, 1917.



Only the shepherd eyes
Could bear the shining skies
Of Bethlehem.

When the star shone out
Upon a world of doubt
And sleeping men,

Only the pure in heart
Could see the heavens part
Before Christ's hem.

To-day, oh men of earth
Who think the Second Birth
Is still afar,

Redeem your first mistake,
Watch, with hearts awake
And doors ajar.

Lift up your eyes!
There, in the riven skies,
The Morning Star!

THE GIFT.



To capture and hold fast one gem
From Heaven's splendid diadem

Invisible to earthly eyes,
To give to men this God-like prize

In word or paint or music tone,
And comfort them—this gift alone

Would pay for my earth's pilgrimage,
Nor could I ask a fairer wage.

TO A FIREFLY.

(*To Mrs. T——.*)



Tiny bearer of the spark,
 Could we as consecrated be
 Men would have light enough to see
There really isn't any dark.

SUBSTANCE.



Our castles in the air
Shall lift their domes
When mortal homes
Have crumbled and grown bare.

Fair dream and bright ideal
Brushing the skies,
Your prophet eyes
Have glimpsed the real.

RAINBOWS.



As sunshine heals with rainbow wings the stormy sky,
So God shall wipe away all tears from every eye.

REALITY.



We measure the distance from Pole to Pole,
But who can measure the length of Soul?

We know the size of the heart of man,
But the heart that is Life no hand can span.

We count the miles to the stars above,
But who can fathom the depths of Love?

Oh man, with your science exact and profound.
Thank God that Reality cannot be bound!

COMMON THINGS.



"I cannot write of this or that,"

The little poet cries,

"The subject is too stale, too flat

For me to improvise."

Pray God may give our vision wings,

And open wide our eyes

To see that even common things

Were made in Paradise.

TO A PAPER CUTTER.



I had been blind for empty ages;
Now, from the living heart of the pages
Bared by your blade to set me free,
Truth has looked out, and I can see.

BLUE.



I think there is no other hue
That satisfies the heart as blue.

The blue that gardeners so prize
To make their flower-paradise;

The blue of every tiny pool
That lies so still, so clear, so cool;

Transparent blue of summer skies,
That lifts and crowns and glorifies.

Oh endless blue of airy nights,
Of open spaces, clean delights,

Expand this narrow heart of mine,
And make it half as true as thine.

ACTIVITY.



With mighty effort Dawn ploughed through the rich night
Heaving its dark heart as the ploughman the clay
Wide in her wake were deep furrows of fertile light.
Then man came out to sow the shining seeds of day

ESSENCE.



Let India keep her liliated drifts,
And France her poppied fields;
To me one perfect blossom yields
All of creation's gifts.

SOME WINTER LAVENDER.



I had not hoped for this sweet shower
 When gardens yield but memory
Or expectation. Purple flower,
 You built a fragrant bridge for me,
To span the chill 'twixt fall and spring,
And make my little world to sing.

FOREVER.



Born of a wiser, ampler mind
Than that which animates mankind;
Untouched by doubt, unchecked by years,
Without maturing hemispheres;
Unhurried by the lips that pray
To frame perfection in a day;
Forever is God's gentler time
To make the humblest life sublime.

INSPIRATION.



How still and quiet the streams and brooks,
How pure and silent the white earth looks ;

Like a holding of breath or a listening ear,
This winter, holy time of the year ;

Till in answer to prayer the hand of spring
Releases the beauty in everything.

Oh turbulent heart, be still and know,
For a season rest as the silent snow,

Wait till you touch the infinite source,
Then, strengthened anew, resume your course.

In the spring of your growth you shall flow again
And freshen the thirsty desert plain.

THE OUTFRIDERS OF SPRING.



To-day at dawn I sallied forth
 With the outriders of spring;
 Soared with every feathered wing
Flying north;

Sniffed a freshness in the air;
 Felt the sunbeams on my face,
 And a kindly warming grace
Everywhere.

Now the papers prophesy
 Cold and frost and wintry wind;
 If to-morrow be unkind
What care I?

I have been adventuring
 For a brief but golden day
 With the forerunners of May,
With the outriders of spring.

Courtesy of the *Sun Dial*.

TO THE GIVER OF ALL GOOD GIFTS.



Too shallow far these phrases are
To thank for fresh anemonies.
Within my heart's immortal banks
Must start the quickened root of thanks
To grow you blossoms fair as these.

*AS PRODIGALS MY THOUGHTS
GO HOME.*



As prodigals my thoughts go home,
My wandering thoughts that far did roam.

In wantonness and revelry
They spent their rich legacy;

From desert plain and tempest sea,
Now penitent they go to Thee.

Oh Love, receive these truant ones,
Thy lost and found and youngest sons.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD.



Soulless a colored window
 But for the morning light
Lifting its hidden splendors
 Out of a starless night;

Man but an outlined image,
 Veiled his transcendent grace,
But for the inner splendor
 Shining behind his face.

Visible bond of freemen,
 Touch of immortal flame,
Grave on my palms and forehead
 Thine indelible name.

THE PURE IN HEART.



Blessèd are the pure in heart,
The pure in heart whose hands can part
The garments of unrighteousness,
And fashion man a seamless dress;
Who tread through night a shining way,
And leave behind the trail of day;
Whose feet with fearlessness are shod,
Because their eyes see through to God.

HIGHLIGHTS.



Each common thing
 Has its highlight;
Winter its edge of spring,
 Night
Its oriole wing
 Of dawn,
And the black bowl
 A fingerprint of white
For soul.

Straight from His shimmering sky
 Into the dark
 That I knew,
Love at His anvil let fly
 The luminous spark
 That is you.

LIGHTER OF LAMPS.



You lit my lamp, and bade me keep it clear ;
Why should I wish to hold your presence here ?
Were you to linger longer where you are
The world would shine the less for one, lost star.
Unbarring doors and gates, I fling them wide,
Grateful you paused although you may not bide.
Along your pathway shall new splendors start,
Sufficient this bright certainty, my heart.

KING OF KINGS.



No more from darkened wall to wall
And down the Royal Palace hall
Shall stones repeat the lackey's call:
 "Make way for the king."

From hearts swept clean of fleshly things
There rise majestic, spirit wings
To brush aside these earthly kings.
 Make way for the King!

Oh men, awake, rejoice and sing!
To-day Love comes on holy wing;
Go crown the only living King.
 The king is dead; long live the King!

Courtesy of the *Junior League Bulletin*.

WHEN THESE COME BACK.



Their eyes have seen His image face to face,
And since, they wear a new and shining grace.

Their hands have "touched and handled things unseen,"
Their hands will evermore be strong and clean.

Of hearts that give their utmost offering
They have made dwelling places for the King.

Out there where towns in ruins lie
They have built temples that shall never die.

Lo! every plain or trench or muddy mound
Where these make sacrifice is holy ground.

When these come back to you, oh world once old,
They shall transform your very dust to gold.

OUR TRUST.



Jesus knelt in Gethsemane
To lift the world to the feet of God.
A lonely, deserted vigil he kept;
His disciples slept
Prone on the sod.
"Could ye not watch one hour with me?"
Others have gone for Love's own sake
To keep a vigil with sacrifice.
To-morrow they'll come to us sanctified
And stand at our side,
And call us thrice.
Pray God we may answer: "Wide awake!"

SWORDS.



Though I must be a stay-at-home,
I yet would use as valiantly
The gleaming sword of Liberty
As they who fight beyond the foam.

There is as great a battle-ground
Within the hearts of us who stay
As they will find who yesterday
Embarked in vessels eastward bound.

A greater need to strike and slay
(If righteousness is soon to win)
The selfishness that lurks within
Than to destroy insensate clay.

I, too, have heard the rolling drum
That calls each to his battlefield;
I take my helmet and my shield,
And answer fearlessly: "I come!"

I pray to consecrate my sword
Within the borders of this land,
To wield it with as clean a hand
As they who carried theirs abroad;

That when I hear returning feet,
The feet of men who've fought and won,
With sword unsheathed beneath the sun,
I, too, may march the shining street.

WINGS.



"They shall mount up with wings as eagles." Straight
And strong and free they mount and fly,
No air too rarefied, no sky too high—
They bear the key to that far shining gate;
For Love and Sacrifice and Honor, too,
On tireless wing go with them where they go,
And who shall say there is no added glow
Across the clouds they brush as they pass through?

"They shall mount up with wings as eagles." Shell
Is impotent to bring these down to earth,
Whose eyes have swept the height of man's estate—
Untrammelled space; they must forever dwell
Close to the deathless light that gave them birth,
And bade them mount as eagles, free and straight.

WINGS OF THE MORNING.
(To An Aviator)



When his wings failed him, think you it so strange
That he should change
Them for a better pair?
Wings of the Morning, swiftly, tenderly bear
This young Knight
To the High Court of Light!

TO THE FOREIGN LEGION.



A Légionnaire was seen to salute the
statue of Washington that stands on
the Treasury steps.—*The Reporter*.

No mortal time can make the spirit mute
That moved you to so gallant a salute.

It is a deathless spirit that makes one
All fearless men like you and Washington.

Accept the tribute of his outstretched hand
As symbol of our love, heroic band.

Courtesy of the *New York Sun*.

LISTEN !



To-day there is a tendency
To celebrate the victory
Of Right with banner and with horn.
We who have bravely, nobly borne
The quaking of this world of ours,
And seen the whirlwind fell its towers,
And still looked on with quiet eyes
Because we trusted there would rise
Out of supremest sacrifice
At last the pearl of greatest price—
We should not waste the fruit of prayer,
Nor fill the pregnant, vibrant air
With blatancy; after the flame,
The devastating wind, there came
A still, small voice; His healing word
In the deep silences is heard.

TO THE ARMY OF OCCUPATION IN GERMANY.



Symbolic soldier of the free,
Go, mount your guard in Germany.

Leave, if you will, your gun behind,
But take to every darkened mind

The torch it lost, the torch you found
Upon the nations' battle-ground;

Take to blinded German eyes
This vision of a freeman's prize,

And to the ears that still can hear,
The gospel of your faith make clear.

Symbolic soldier of the free,
They need your light in Germany.

Mark well whom your command is from:
"Go, occupy until I come."

Courtesy of the *New York Sun*.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD.



'Twas the Spirit of God that won the war
That shattered our century-bolted door,
And raised you up from your bed of ease,
And bore you forth on the militant breeze.

'Twas the Spirit of God that won the war,
That dwelt in the heart of the least of you,
Tender and strong and true,
That stamped on your soul a selfless creed,
Making your own, humanity's need,
Bidding you go in your fearless youth,
Clasping the two-edged sword of Truth.

'Twas the Spirit of God that won the war,
That stood by your side in the trench at night,
That soared with you in your morning flight,
High and high,

Brushing your wings across the sky,

'Twas the Spirit of God that made you fly,
Fearless and free as air—

It went with you everywhere.

Over the sea and over the land,

Hand in hand

With you whom He sent

Christ went.

'Twas the Spirit of God that won the war,
Greater than gun, greater than mine,
Greater than all because divine,
Spirit of David and Joan of Arc,
Flame as a spark
Burning a path of light through the dark,
Bringing order from chaos and night,
And to our eyes, light.

Mighty as ever, the valiant few
Led by You—
Spirit of God that won the war,
You who are wise and compassionate—
Not the legions of lust and hate.

Brothers who stand at the open gate,
Pause and pray,
Lift up your hearts in thanks to-day,
Lift up your eyes, the world is free,
Free for you and free for me.
He walks abroad whom we adore—
The Spirit of God that won the war.

1492 — 1919.



Columbus' sail is folded to its mast,
And here, instead, are wings for the first, fast
Flight o'er the deep. Rising, they brush aside
The little laws of time and space and tide,
And bring the earth's remotest limits face
To face: to-day there is no distant place,
No boundaries remain, for air is free,
And Mind has said: "There shall be no more sea."

Columbus, hail your sons so near the sky;
If you had failed, where were their faith to fly?

HANDS.



We have done what our hands have found to do,
We have done it with prayer and might,
All have helped to see it through
Because we have known it was right.

Oh many the idle hands before,
Foreign to toil and pain,
But during the four, long years of war
We learned to use them again.

And the work of our hands was balm to our soul,
We labored as friend and friend,
Shoulder to shoulder, facing the goal,
We strove to the very end.

And now that the end is here, Lord,
We wait for your new commands;
Silence the gun, sheathe the sword,
But consecrate our hands.

Give them a task that is worthy of Thee,
Sure of a rich increase,
Lord, who in darkness made us to see
That service is joy and peace.

THE NEW WORLD.
Christmas, 1918.



“Where two or three together claim
The power and presence of my name,
Lo! there am I.”

The sacrificial fields of France
Were closer to his healing glance
Than the high sky.

No miracle to Love is this—
That Heaven should stoop the earth to kiss
And sanctify;

That Heaven should stoop and lift earth up
That Christ might pour His loving cup
Of living wine

On all the devastated land,
Until it bloom beneath His hand
Like Palestine.

Oh nations, guard His gift to you—
A world washed clean and fashioned new,
A holy shrine.

Where angel feet have lately stood
There kneel in one vast brotherhood.



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